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## Teaching translation: A suggested lesson plan on translation of advertising through the use of authentic materials

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### Abstract

The role of translation in our lives is of great importance as translation has always enriched human life as a tool for communication and sharing information across the world. However, it is observed that in the teaching of translation the literature is missing teaching materials for different genres. The aim of this paper is to demonstrate that it is possible to teach different genres of translation through authentic materials with a special focus on teaching the translation of advertising. This study involves a suggested lesson plan which was conducted in a Translation Course in an English Language Teaching Department. The syllabus of the course is based on Reiss's Text- Type Approach in order to provide students with the translation of various genres and the lesson plan presented in this study is designed in accordance with The PPP Approach to Language Teaching. Thus, it also shares a common feature with language teaching studies. The materials used in this lesson plan were commercials, slogans and logos from daily life. Considering its real life function and being a sample translation lesson plan, this paper is assumed to be a creative and contributive study for the teaching of translation of advertising and genre-based teaching of translation in general.

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### 1. Introduction

It goes without saying that translation has always existed in every part of life since the beginning of time. Regardless of what the languages, needs, methods, or texts are translation has been used in every field of studies,

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and this has led to the multidisciplinary nature of translation studies. After being placed under main disciplines such as Linguistics or Literature for a very long time, translation studies have only recently begun to be realized as an independent discipline. Definitions and theories of translation itself also seem to have evolved through time; from the word level transfer of meaning to sentence level and later the integration of cultural elements. Theories of translation are mainly concerned with the appropriate translation methods for the widest possible range of texts or text-categories. This study focuses on teaching the translation of advertising texts which is only one part of the syllabus of a one semester long translation course which was based on Reiss's functionalist approach to text typology within translation studies. The reason why Reiss's text –typology is taken as a ground for the design of this course is that the course is offered in English Language Teaching departments to provide a general knowledge about Translation Studies. Thus, the course is aimed to include a variety of textual genres and specific strategies to be applied for each to give students the chance to translate as many different text types as possible. This idea corresponds with the official course description offered by the university:

Main theories and approaches in Translation Studies; translation of authentic Turkish texts which are written in different topics and genres into English, appropriateness of a translated text, critical evaluation of different translations of a text through error analysis; style, word choice, the role and importance of translation in language learning and cultural aspect of translation (Ders İçerikleri, 2015).

With the emergence of a functionalist and communicative approach to the analysis of translation in the 70s and 80s, looking for an equivalent in the target language was no longer the focus of Translation Studies. Reiss's Text-Type Theory which although based on equivalence, placed more emphasis on the functional relationship between source and target texts (Nord, 1997). In Reiss's taxonomy, texts can be categorized in three types: 1) informative "text to transfer news, knowledge, opinions, etc. – in sum, to inform" 2) expressive "mainly to transmit contents organized in an artistic fashion, consciously organizing the content according to aesthetic criteria"; and 3) operative "to transmit contents of persuasive character to induce the text's receiver to act in the sense intended by the text's sender (or his client) – intention which corresponds to the appellative function of the language" (Reiss & Vermeer, 1984). According to Reiss's categorization, an advert is an operative text which calls readers to respond in a certain way and may require them to call on encyclopedic knowledge, either of the text genre or culture in general. These texts are aimed to influence readers by appealing to their sensitivities and hidden desires and encouraging them to do or buy something (Smith, 2002).

In Reiss's theory the goal is to ensure that the translated text functions in the way it is aimed in the source text. This goal is the meeting point of Reiss's text-type studies with Vermeer's general theory of translation which supports the idea that the target text needs to meet the specific purpose, or *skopos* in the target culture. *Skopos* is a Greek word which means 'aim' or 'purpose'. Vermeer's *Skopos* Theory clearly suggests that translation should be done in accordance with the purpose for which the target text is intended and any strategy can be applied as long as the *skopos* is fulfilled (Smith, 2002). Au (1999) states that in the translation of adverts translators are free to use a whole range of strategies and their decision depends on the *skopos* of the commission. He also refers to functionalist Nord (1997) by quoting: within *skopos*, 'cultural adaptation, paraphrase, expansion, reduction, modulation, transportation, substitution, loanword, calque, literal translation or even omission' are all acceptable translation strategies. In the case of advertising, the function is to encourage the potential consumer to buy. The advert should be translated in such a way that this function is achieved, irrespective of the strategy used (Smith, 2002).

Advertising texts not only include words, but also cultural concepts, ideas and visuals. Mooij (2004) defines translating advertising copy as "painting the tip of an iceberg and hoping the whole thing will turn red". He touches on the cultural notion of advertising by claiming that advertising is not made of words, but made of culture. Translating advertising tools is beyond translating a regular written text as they include cultural elements such as shared beliefs, attitudes, norms, roles and values. Hence, Reboul's (1978) suggestion "to transfer an advertisement from one language (and culture) to another, possible answers would be to translate, adapt, and create" is worth considering. As advertising texts are rich in cultural and social elements, whether they are translatable or not is still being questioned. However, due to their high cultural and social content, financial and brand image concerns make the translation of advertising texts necessary.

Translation is much more than substituting words of one language into another; it's an art, i.e.; a teachable one (Pienemann, 1989). Furthermore, translation is a discipline whose materials are directly supplied from real life. Therefore, teaching a translation course without touching on different textual genres and not bringing authentic materials of them seems impractical and only theoretical. Rogers (1988) defines authentic materials as “appropriate” and “quality” in terms of goals, objectives, learner needs and interest and “natural” in terms of real life and meaningful communication. Bell (1994) stresses the importance of materials in the teaching of translation “Materials should be authentic in terms of texts and tasks. This will be a great help for the students if they face real-world texts and tasks”. In this study the suggested lesson plan on teaching the translation of advertising consists of authentic materials which belong to advertising world; such as logos, slogans and TV commercials.

While teaching translation the techniques should be chosen with attention to both sides of the nature of translation: first its objective and theoretical principles and second the subjective part which is mainly related to the student's intuition and creativity (Tisgam, 2009). Thus, the teaching of the suggested lesson plan given within this study is intended to contain basic knowledge about translation itself and the active involvement of the students with creative tasks. As the course is offered to pre-service English teachers who are familiar with language teaching methodologies and the two instructors teaching the course are the majors of the same field, the course layout has been adopted from “The PPP Lesson Structure” which has been widely used in language teaching materials and continues to be used in modified form today.

The PPP lesson structure is a typical cycle of situational approach where a three phase sequence is followed: Presentation, Practice and Production. The first phase starts with an introductory phase in which new teaching points are presented and illustrated in some way and where the focus is on comprehension and recognition. Examples of the new teaching point are given in different contexts. This is often followed by a second phase in which the students practice using the new teaching point in a controlled context using the content often provided by the teacher. The third phase is a free practice period during which students try out the teaching point in a free context and in which real or simulated communication is the focus (Richards, 2006). This study gathers a foreign language teaching method and the translation of a textual genre together to show that translation is a teachable principle with authentic materials and the design of the course can be inspired by a technique used for a related discipline.

In brief, grounding on the suggested educational achievements offered by the official course description and adopting the Reiss's Text –Type Theory accordingly, the syllabus of “Turkish- English Translation Course” is designed. Since the course is offered in an ELT Department, the PPP structure is followed for the formation of the lesson plan as it is a familiar notion of language teaching studies. In addition, the use of authentic materials is notably favored as translation is an inseparable part of life. This syllabus is assumed to be significant in terms of being applied for the first time in the department. Each lesson plan provides theoretical information and creative activities for the practice of translation instead of asking students to try translations of randomly given texts without raising awareness. This lesson plan which specifically focuses on the translation of advertising is an extract taken from the syllabus of the course that can be regarded as a sample plan. Therefore it is applicable for the other genres present on the syllabus.

## **2. Methodology**

### *2.1. Participants*

This study was conducted in “Turkish-English Translation Course” at Gazi University English Language Teaching Department in 2014 Spring Term. The lesson plans were designed and carried out in 10 different sections of 3<sup>rd</sup> year students by two instructors. The course lasts for one semester of 15 weeks (See Appendix A).

### *2.2. Instruments*

The process consists of two weeks of instruction: First the application of the lesson plan and second the presentation of projects and feedback session. The lesson plan was applied in three lessons each of which lasted 50

minutes and students were given lecture notes of the related session on a weekly basis. On the second week, students present their group projects and fill out a feedback form with semi-structured interview questions.

### 2.2.1. The Lesson Plan

The lesson plan is based on the session of the course syllabus which focuses on “Translation of Advertising”. In the design of the lesson plan the PPP Lesson Structure which is commonly used in Language Teaching Studies is adapted to teaching translation. Thus the plan is divided into three phases as presentation, practice and production. In each phase of the plan, authentic materials such as brand logos, slogans and TV commercials are used for bringing real life examples of advertising into the translation class.

#### 2.2.1.1. Presentation:

Step 1 (~15’): The aim of the presentation phase is to raise awareness to the social and cultural aspect of the genre. Thus the teacher introduces the genre of the week by opening up a discussion with the quotation. “Translating advertising copy is like painting the tip of an iceberg.” (Mooij , 2004). Then the teacher provides visual examples about the translation of a brand’s slogan in three different languages and asks the following elicitation questions:

- Are these slogans translations of each other?
- Do you think the cultural elements are taken into consideration?
- How do you find the Turkish version?



Fig.1: Slogan of Mc Donald’s in three languages: English, Turkish and German

Step 2 (~15’): Following the discussion on Mc Donald’s slogans in different languages, another quotation from Coca Cola’s CEO Douglas Daft is given to elaborate more on why slogans might be transferred into different cultures in different forms: “We kept standardizing our practices, while local sensitivity had become absolutely essential to success” (Daft, 2000). To elaborate on this quotation the visuals below are utilized.



Fig.2: Local Sensitivity applied by international brands in Ramadan period in Turkey

#### 2.2.1.2. Practice:

Step 1 (~20’): In order to give a general idea about translation considerations that should be taken into account students are provided with the features of advertisements suggested by Jan (2001):

- They repeat words or phrases to ensure the message will be remembered.
- They offer bonuses, promises of bargains, of getting something for nothing.
- Use stereotypes ( e.g. use of young attractive people to promote a gym).
- They use quotes or authority from famous people.

- Call for action, the expression of urgency to act on the advice (e.g. buy now before stocks run out).
- They contain a mix of facts and persuasive comment.
- They focus on the positive and ignore the negative.
- They use exaggerated language, full of adjectives and adverbs to paint an appealing picture (e.g. the biggest sale ever).
- They start sentences with the imperative.
- They ask rhetorical questions (e.g. do you have tired, dull hair?)
- They use memorable images and slogans ( e.g. smooth, sleek, shiny hair is yours with super care).
- Their sole purpose is to convince the reader to buy their product.

After presenting the features and eliciting students' ideas about how the translation of advertising text should be considering these features, teacher refers back to previously learned translation strategies. Translation strategies of Nord (1997) are taught in the first two weeks of the syllabus which are reserved for the theoretical knowledge about translation. Every week a discussion session is held in the class about the strategies that can be used for the genre of the week. Thus, students' opinions are elicited in this step of practice before moving to the translation of slogans and TV commercials.

Step 3 (~30'): To provide a hands on activity for the translation of slogans teacher divides the class into two groups, one receiving the logos of Turkish brands and the other receiving the slogans of the same brands. Students are asked to walk around the class and find their pair by matching the brands with their slogans. Teacher creates the context by saying that these Turkish brands are planning to get into the American market and they need their slogans to be transferred into English and used in the American context. At the end pairs share their translations with the whole class and another discussion is held about the strategies used in each pair's work. Some examples are as follows:


<p><b>Slogans:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bir bilmecem var çocuklar</li> <li>• Tek benzeri öteki teki</li> <li>• Başka bir arzunuz?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Brands:</b></p> 
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Fig. 3: Examples of slogans and brands

Step 3 (~50'): Following the theoretical information and practice, students watch 4 different Turkish commercials chosen by the teacher and they work in groups of four. Each group is assigned one of the commercials and provided with the Turkish script of it. A similar follow up discussion activity about the translations of each group is led by the teacher by taking the features of advertisements and suggested techniques into account.

### 2.2.1.3. Production

A group project to be presented on the following week is assigned by the teacher. In the project students are supposed to pick one TV commercial in Turkish and translate its script into English. Projects could be either a recorded role play or dubbing. Criteria for the assessment of the projects are chosen collaboratively by the teacher and the students. They evaluate the projects in terms of creativity, adaptation, practicality, linguistic features. The following week completed projects are presented to the class, class discussions are held for each one and assessment is done with the criteria form submitted to each group to grade the final work of other groups. The same criteria form is used both by the teacher and the groups and the average grade for each work is calculated through the assessment of the teacher and the groups.

### 2.2.2. Feedback Form

To provide more concrete results in evaluating this study which is thought to be an innovative way of teaching translation in ELT departments, students were asked to reflect on their own learning experience of this lesson on a feedback form. Feedback forms are composed of semi-structured interview questions given to the students on a voluntary basis. 98 students participated in the interview. The forms are written in Turkish to let students reflect comfortably in their native language. Feedback forms consist of six questions which are later interpreted in the discussion part of the article in terms of educational achievements, general and genre specific comments about the course and personal gains.

## 3. Discussion

The suggested lesson plan of this study is based on the course objectives given in the official description of the course which presupposes the translation of various text genres with applicable translation strategies. Designing the course syllabus accordingly, the instructors of the course aimed to evaluate the practicality of the plan by gathering students' written reflections on the related genre. The interpretation of the students' comments is divided into three groups.

### 3.1. Educational Achievements

Students' comments about their educational achievements in translation of advertising show similarity with the objectives of the course description. Some students believe that they have developed their translational skills as well as their language skills:

*"I have gained the ability to translate short items in an effective and meaningful way."*

*"I realized that free translation is more effective than direct translation."*

*"I learned to give the intended meaning in a short and impressive way in English, as well."*

### 3.2. General and Genre Specific Comments about the Course

Though it was the first time for most of the students to try the translation of such a variety of genres they generally stated that they found the course activities and projects fun and creative. As for the translation of advertising their comments show that the aim of raising awareness about the genre and the strategies to be followed was achieved:

*"The lesson was fun, informative and open to creativity."*

*"The practice parts made our learning permanent."*

*"The assignments and in-class translation activities were really explanatory, and they helped us compare two different languages."*

*"Thanks to the strategies and theoretical information given in the course, we learned how to create an operative slogan translation."*

*"In-class activities were really fun, and also it was really enjoyable to watch our projects of TV ads."*

*"Creating something new and writing my own slogan for a well-known brand with my own way of interpretation was very delightful."*

Students also reported some genre-based challenges they faced:

*"The translation of daily and cultural elements and humor in slogans was difficult."*

*"The most challenging part was due to the differences between the source and target culture."*

Another challenge seems to be the use of the technology for their projects: “*Dubbing was difficult as we don’t have the necessary technological skills.*” Though students are given the chance to choose between dubbing or role play for their projects both options required computer use. To eliminate any problems related to the use of technology, students were allowed to form their own groups by having at least one person who can deal with the technical part of the assignment.

### 3.3. Personal Gains

Translation itself is a real life notion and one of the main gains of the course design was to bring real life into the classroom with authentic materials. By working on slogans, logos and TV commercials students started to see many daily things out of the classroom as a translation material. They seem to internalize translation and some even value it as a future occupation:

*“I find myself trying to adapt all the Turkish TV ads that I watch into English.”*

*“I pay close attention to the stylistic features of the ads and sometimes I even create my own version of slogans for the brands. It feels so nice.”*

*“It made me feel that I could do well in the advertising industry.”*

## 4. General Discussion and Suggestions

Providing a genre-based syllabus for a translation course, and bringing real life into the classroom lead to an innovative learning atmosphere. The suggested lesson plan in this study promotes more student activity and involvement by presenting theoretical knowledge, offering hands on activities and projects which enhance students’ creativity. The course design and the related genre seems highly motivating and welcomed by the students, especially on account of its creative and fun character and the chance to find one’s own real life experiences in it.

The application of a lesson plan similar to this is suggested to upper intermediate and above foreign language competency classes. As the content of the plan requires a fund of general knowledge, the target learners are suggested to be at least young adults. Though it is thought to be applicable for translation courses offered in English Language Teaching Departments and Translator Training Programs, this lesson plan could be adapted for the teaching of any discipline which in some way includes translation such as Foreign Language Teaching, English for Specific Purposes, Literature, Advertising, Mass Media and Marketing.

### Appendix A. Weekly Schedule of the Syllabus

WEEK	THEME	ASSIGNMENT / NOTES
1	Introduction & Theoretical Information	
2	Introduction & Theoretical Information	Assignment -1
3	Translation of Literary Texts ( Poetry)	Assignment -2
4	Translation of Short Stories	Assignment -3 (Announcement of Research about Commercials)
5	Translation of Advertising	(Announcement of Project-1)
6	Project -1 Presentation	
7	Midterm Week/ Revision Week ( Tentative) (Announcement of Research about News)	
8		
9	Translation of News	Assignment -4
10	Translation of Newspaper Articles	Assignment -5
11	Translation of Subtitles	(Announcement of Project-2)



12	Project -2 Presentation	(Announcement of Research about Typical Cultural Expressions)
13	Translation of Colloquial and Idiomatic Expressions	Assignment -6
14	Translation of Excerpts from Daily Life	
15	Revision	

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The visual materials in Figure 1, 2 and 3 are used for non profit educational purposes.

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